

2021 Conservation Employee Training



CET Preliminary Course Descriptions and Workshop Activities

MONDAY – 08.23.2021

ALL DAY

- 10:00 – 5:00 – Plants that Bite Back – Carolina Beach State Park

*This workshop is one of the State Parks Environmental Education Learning Experiences (EELs). Participants will explore Carolina Beach State Park and discuss the different types of carnivorous plants that call Carolina Beach home. Several interesting carnivorous plants thrive at Carolina Beach State Park by trapping and digesting insects. Among these carnivorous plants are pitcher plants, bladderworts, sundews and butterworts, but the most familiar — and the most spectacular — is the Venus flytrap. Information on different habitats that exist within the park and how each habitat affects plants and animals will also be covered as part of this session. Come prepared to learn and participate in various activities. Presenter: Stephanie Covell, Carolina Beach State Park Ranger. This session qualifies for 6 hours of Criteria 1 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. You must provide your own transportation to the Park. **Class size limited to 30 participants.** Lunch provided with separate registration cost (\$15).*

MORNING

- 9:00 – 12:00 – Conservation Environmental Education - Rick McSwain

Environmental Education is an important part of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Participants will use the Project Wild, K-12 Activity Guide. The goal of Project Wild is to assist learners of any age in developing awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment to result in informed decisions, responsible behavior and constructive actions concerning wildlife and the environment upon which all life depends. This training will serve two-fold; as an icebreaker for those new to the Conservation Districts, and to learn more about the Certification program for Environmental Educators. Potential 6 hours Continuing Education Credit/Criteria II, (outdoor experience) if you participate in the Afternoon Farm Tour; this session also qualifies for 1.5 hours of NRCS CP CEUs.

AFTERNOON

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 1 - Farm Tour - Rick McSwain

*We will be touring an annual Crop/Pastured operation. Participants will collect data in preparation to write a Cost Share Contract for Cropland Conversion and Agricultural Road Repair. Data collected will include interviewing the farmer, determining field slopes, Basics of Surveying, Soil Sampling, Reviewing topographical maps and Aerial Photography. Participants will collect data in preparation for completing a Farm Plan that will include, forestland, pastureland/hay land. We will be discussing throughout the tour the options of Food, Water and Shelter for wildlife, to complete the Environmental Education component. You must provide your own transportation to the Farm. Lunch provided at the Farm at 12:00 with separate registration cost (\$15). In general, participants are expected to attend all 6 “Conservation for New Employees” topics throughout the week, unless joining as a continuation of the morning’s Conservation Environmental Education session. “Conservation for New Employees” is geared towards technical staff with three years of experience, or less. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. You must attend Parts 1 through 6 to be eligible for CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

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TUESDAY – 08.24.2021

MORNING

- 9:00 – 12:00 – General Session

This year's CET General Session will cover topics around flood resiliency, wildlife management technical assistance, ideas for local workgroups, an in-depth look at the new training calendar and round out with a leadership panel discussion to address questions from attendees.

LUNCH – 12:00 – 1:00 - *provided for General Session participants at the hotel.*

AFTERNOON

- 1:00 – 3:45 – Get to Know Google Apps

*Not exactly sure how to use Google apps? If so, then this session is for you. Join Dana Miller, Education Coordinator for Haywood County Soil and Water Conservation District, to learn the basics of Google apps. Learn how to navigate your Google Drive, make and share Google documents, create Google Forms, and more. Google has so much to offer, you just have to know how to use it! Participants should have a laptop computer or request one during registration. Participants will need to set up a Google account prior to the session in order to participate. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Educational Share Fair

*Join us to learn how to incorporate the history of soil conservation and new creative teaching ideas in the classroom during the annual “Educational Share Fair.” The upcoming contest theme, “Soil & Water... Yours for Life,” will highlight resources for district educators to use with their contest outreach this year. In addition, other innovative educational outreach tools will be shared by participating district educators. This session is always a great hit and provides valuable resources for soil and water conservation educators and qualifies for 4 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 2 - Agricultural Road Repair Design/Cropland Conversion Requirements – Rick McSwain, Kayla McCoy – Wilkes SWCD

*Data collected from the previous day's farm tour will be used to design Agricultural Road Repair, calculate soil loss by using RUSLE equation, Create Aerial Photo Plan Map, Review topo maps, Web Soil Survey and NRCS Section IV Technical Guide. Participants should have a laptop computer or request one during registration. Participants are expected to attend all 6 “Conservation for New Employees” topics throughout the week. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 1:00 – 5:00 – CCAP BMP Backyard Rain Garden

*This session will provide training on the design and installation of a backyard rain garden. Participants will perform a site assessment, fill out the Rain Garden Checklist form, complete the design of a rain garden using the design worksheet, discuss the Operations and Maintenance Plan, and discuss the proper installation and planting of backyard rain garden. Training includes a site visit to a completed rain garden at Bradley Creek Elementary School. This session qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

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- 1:00 – 5:00 – Basics of Surveying - Part 1

*Session is intended for new employees and anyone in need of a refresher for surveying with a laser level or dumpy level. Participants are encouraged to bring their own equipment for use in the field. Topics include: setting up a level; two-peg check for level error; surveying a cross-section and profile; closed-loop or traverse survey; grid survey (time permitting); field book note keeping; reducing field notes and checking closure accuracy. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. You must attend both Part 1 and 2 to be eligible for CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Battleship NORTH CAROLINA Excursion

*Across the river is moored Battleship NORTH CAROLINA, a World War II ship. Tour the ship and learn about it's history and use – envision the daily life and fierce combat her crew faced in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. Learn about conservation and land preservation activities taking place on Eagles Island, and significant efforts by the New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District! You must provide your own transportation to the Battleship. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 3:45 – 4:15 – *break for refreshments.*

- 4:15 – 5:00 – Creating Videos for your District

*Join Dana Miller, Education Coordinator for Haywood County Soil and Water Conservation District, to explore WeVideo, a video editing website. In the virtual age, creating high-quality digital content is important, but can often be confusing. WeVideo is easy-to-use, affordable and integrates well with Google apps. Using the website, participants will learn how to splice video clips, add and adjust sound, add text and pictures, design transitions, and much more. Computer optional for participants; **class size limited to 30 participants.***

EVENING

- 6:30 – 8:00 – Off-site Cookout hosted by NC CDEA

Join conference attendees for a shrimp boil and networking time! Arrangements are being finalized; plans are to offer water taxi service across the Cape Fear River from the riverfront hotel dock to Battleship Park! Bring your chairs or a blanket to sit and relax! Separate registration cost (\$15); meal provided.

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WEDNESDAY – 08.25.2021

ALL DAY

- 8:00 – 5:00 – Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act for Districts
*An in-depth training session for districts that manage any, or all, of their own funding separate from county processes. Topics will be introduced and examples from local districts will be shared. Plan to review requirements for budget officers and finance officers, bonding, budget approval processes, project ordinances, pre-auditing, LGC forms, audit requirements and more. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***
- 8:00 – 5:00 – Excursion to Fort Fisher Aquarium and Recreation Area
*Bring your old shoes and get ready for a discovery trek to the aquarium and salt marshes at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. During an estuarine ecology session, explore the creatures that inhabit the fragile salt marsh ecosystem and learn why they are so important and how we can protect them. Change your shoes and get ready for a presentation on Fort Fisher Aquarium's latest conservation work and a self-led aquarium tour. Participants must bring a pair of dry shoes to change into before entering the aquarium. End the day exploring the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. You must provide your own transportation to the Aquarium. This session will qualify for 4 hours of Environmental Education Certification credit. **Class size limited to 30.** Boxed lunches will be provided.*
- 8:00 – 5:00 – Fundamentals of Soils
*Participants will learn to read and interpret soil reports, as well as how to collect soil samples. Training includes explanation of soil morphology, texture, water holding capacity, CEC, pH, and erodibility. Attendees will learn about soil mapping, soil investigations, limiting layers on land use, and how to use Web Soil Survey interpretive information. This is an all-day field training, so come prepared to be outside with sturdy footwear and sun protection. You must provide your own transportation to the training site (approximately 45-minute drive from the hotel). This session qualifies for 6 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30.** Boxed lunches will be provided.*

MORNING

- 8:00 – 12:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 3 - Cost Share Basics – Division Staff, Barry Greer – Wilkes SWCD
*Join us for a basic review of cost share program essentials – CS2 101, basics of contract routing, how to set up a 6-part folder, cost share details for meeting minutes, and soil testing interpretation. This session is appropriate for Conservation for New Employees track participants, and administrators who wish to become more familiar with cost share programs. This session qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 75 participants.***
- 8:00 – 10:00 – Wow 'em With Standards!
*If you want to get into classrooms to teach conservation-- you have to make teachers want you! Participants of this training will analyze various types of lesson plans and will construct a lesson plan using the required standards of the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Discover the secret ingredient that will compel teachers to utilize District Educators to support their students' learning! As a bonus, you will walk out with at least the beginning of a plan to teach this year's contest theme. This session qualifies for 2 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

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- 8:00 – 12:00 – Basics of Surveying - Part 2

*This is a continuation of survey training (participation in Part 1 is mandatory) and will consist entirely of field training on: setting up a level; two-peg check for level error; surveying a cross-section and profile; closed-loop or traverse survey; grid survey (time permitting); field book note keeping; reducing field notes and checking closure accuracy. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. You must attend both Part 1 and 2 to be eligible for CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 10:00 – 10:30 – *break for refreshments.*

- 10:30 – 12:00 – Virtual Programs 101

*This session will cover lessons learned after a year of virtual conservation education, including different virtual presentation styles, best practices in virtual teaching methods, and the challenge of program evaluation. Join us for a group discussion about what has and hasn't worked, as we start to consider what we will take beyond the pandemic from a year of virtual education. This session qualifies for 1.5 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 1 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

LUNCH – 12:00 – 1:00 – *provided at hotel for all on-site participants.*

AFTERNOON

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Document Retention for Districts

*Does your district have copies of cost share contracts that are long past the end of their maintenance period? What about outreach materials that pre-date your staff?? Audio recordings of meetings to prepare minutes from 2020??? The materials made or received by government agencies in NC in carrying on public business are considered "public records". The NC General Assembly has declared that public records and public information compiled by local government are the property of the people. So how long do districts need to keep these public records? When and how can they be disposed of (if ever)? Join staff from the NC Department of Cultural Resources to learn about the Document Retention Schedule for local soil and water conservation districts, and how it can be applied in your office. Hear from NRCS regarding considerations for federal files or information that is co-located in field offices. Leave the session with confidence to do some general file "housekeeping" back home. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 1:00 – 5:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 4 - Farm Planning - Rick McSwain, Randy Willis, NRCS Staff

*We will be going over Farm Planning Procedures to Create a Farm Plan for the farm that was visited on Monday afternoon. Cultural Resource Review; discussion will highlight documentation expectations, timeline, and will provide a general understanding of the process that archeologist Jim Errante goes through for reviews. Participants will complete a Cultural Resource Request Form. A PowerPoint presentation will be shown to demonstrate Livestock Exclusion installation. Participants are expected to attend all 6 "Conservation for New Employees" topics throughout the week. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

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- 1:00 – 5:00 – Grassed Waterway Planning and Design - Part 1

*This session includes planning and designing a grassed waterway. Participants will collect data in the field to use in the classroom (Part 2) for designing a waterway. Site considerations will be discussed including: soils, slopes, adjacent land uses, vegetation, subsurface drains, spoil site, and outlets. This session will be conducted in the field, so come prepared to be outside with sturdy footwear and sun protection. You must provide your own transportation to the training site (approximately 45-minute drive from the hotel). This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30.***

- 1:00 – 2:45 – Carolina Creatures

*Join Becky Skiba from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and take flight into the world of birding and slither into herpetology. Learn ID tips and tricks that will make finding and learning about birds fun and appropriate for all ages and groups. Play games to learn about the threats facing our feathered friends and to better understand how well adapted they are to their environments and food sources. Live snakes and some amphibians will be present (and contained) for us to uncover more about our native species and confidently differentiate between venomous and nonvenomous snakes. Be ready to participate in engaging activities to learn about the diversity of diets, behavior and habitat needs of our eastern Carolina bird, reptile, and amphibian species. This session qualifies for 1.75 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 1.75 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

- 3:00 – 5:00 – Mobile Soils Classroom (MSC) Refresher

*The Mobile Soils Classroom (MSC) trailers provide a variety of concept-based, learner-focused demonstrations that engage people of all ages in learning about soil science, soil management and conservation. Across NC there are six MSC trailers that are hosted in Martin, Duplin, Chatham, Davey, Buncombe, and Burke, but all are available for your district to check out and use! Come ready to tour a trailer, explore hands-on-lessons, and learn how best to deliver the activities available in these mobile classrooms. Leave with the confidence to incorporate this resource in your district's programming. This session qualifies for 2.0 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***

EVENING

- 6:00 – 7:30 – Banquet Dinner

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THURSDAY – 08.26.2021

MORNING

- 8:00 – 10:00 – Crucial Conversations in the Workplace
Do you find it challenging to tackle those difficult conversations in the workplace? Join Bo Dean, New Hanover County Senior Human Resources Analyst, to learn how to best approach those hi-stakes situations and create powerful dialogue that will transform your office environment through problem solving and conflict resolution. This session qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs.
- 8:30 – 10:00 – The Myths and Truths: Use of Agricultural Lands for Non-Agricultural Uses
*Is agricultural land that is used for non-agricultural uses still farmable afterwards? What are potential costs and side effects to future farming on such land? Is North Carolina losing its ability to continue as a strong, viable agribusiness state? Join Mike Carroll with Craven County Cooperative Extension, and Andrew Branan, Assistant Extension Professor with the Agricultural and Resource Economics Department at NC State University, in exploring these questions and others to get the facts surrounding land use and farmability. This session qualifies for 1.5 Environmental Education Certification Credit Hours; this session also qualifies for 1.5 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***
- 8:00 – 10:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 5 - Computer Programs used for Conservation Planning - NRCS Staff
RUSLE2 software training: *this training will focus on functionalities of the software. The theoretical part will be covered on another training. Employees are recommended to take the separate theoretical part before this training demonstration.*
Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Procedure (WHEP): *Planners will learn how to use WHEP as part of their documentation for identification of resource concerns. During discussion we will learn about using the tool on different land uses through a demonstration.*
*Participants are expected to attend all 6 “Conservation for New Employees” topics throughout the week. This session qualifies for 2 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***
- 8:00 – 11:00 – Cover Crops
*This session will provide training on cover crops and their role in reducing soil erosion, improving soil health, soil moisture and soil compaction. Plant species, seedbed preparation, seeding rates, seeding dates, seeding depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be discussed along with applicable local criteria and soil/site conditions. This session qualifies for 3 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***
- 8:00 – 12:00 – Grassed Waterway Planning and Design - Part 2
*This is a continuation of grassed waterway design (participation in Part 1 is mandatory). Attendees will design a grassed waterway using data collected in the field the previous day. Session will cover capacity, stability, width, side slopes, depth, drainage, outlet, and vegetation. Use of computer design tools will be covered, so please bring a laptop. This session qualifies for 4 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. You must attend both Part 1 and 2 to be eligible for CEUs. **Class size limited to 30.***
- 10:00 – 10:30 – *break for refreshments.*

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- 10:30 – 12:00 – Implicit Bias in the Workplace

Please join Linda Thompson, New Hanover County Chief Diversity and Equity Officer, for this discussion... In this training, you will identify what implicit and explicit biases are, the processes that impact the way that individuals interact with people who are demographically dissimilar from them. You will examine how biases are formed and the impact those biases have on our decision-making within organizations and identify how professionals can design better work practices and help to more effectively leverage the potential among employees.

- 10:30 – 12:00 – Conservation for New Employees – Part 6 - Computer Programs used for Conservation Planning
Continued - NRCS Staff

NRCS web soil survey- *Training will showcase this tool and applications for field employees. Discussion will include soils maps, soils reports, and other products from the system. Participants are expected to attend all 6 “Conservation for New Employees” topics throughout the week. This session qualifies for 1.5 hours of NRCS CP CEUs. **Class size limited to 30 participants.***